

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Mike Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway:

Thank you for your diligent efforts to move the 2018 Farm Bill through Congress this year. As you know, commodity prices in rural America are not what they were when the current Farm Bill was enacted in early 2014, and dairy prices are no exception. Our dairy producers continue to endure a sustained period of low milk prices, compounded by trade challenges and capacity issues here at home.

With that in mind, we are eager to work with you to move a Farm Bill that will reform dairy policy, including the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy), which by all accounts has not provided an effective safety net for our producers up to this point. We are grateful that several key policy reforms were enacted in February, but we believe that more must be done in the upcoming Farm Bill.

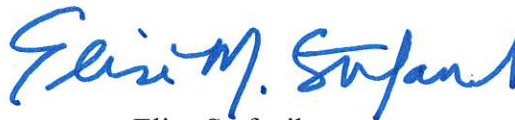
In many dairy producing areas, cost of feed is a significant challenge for producers. In the states we represent, we continually hear from dairy farmers that the feed cost component of MPP-Dairy does not accurately reflect the costs they pay to feed corn, soybean meal, and alfalfa hay to their cows. Therefore, we ask that the Farm Bill require the U.S. Department of Agriculture to analyze and then report back to us in Congress whether the feed cost calculations under MPP-Dairy reflect individual dairy farmers' actual feed costs.

This information will enable us to consider further reforms to dairy policy, with an eye towards crafting a program that reflects the specific challenges facing our farmers. We thank you for your significant efforts and we look forward to working closely with you to advance the 2018 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Ralph Abraham, MD
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Elise Stefanik
MEMBER OF CONGRESS